34 Eccles St Dublin
18th July 1844

My dear Mrs Chapman

I am long in your debt, & more than once I have had my pen in hand to thank you for writing to me, & for your welcome gifts. But I laid it down again under a feeling that I really had nothing to say to you which would be worthy your acceptance, or worth sending such a distance. Sheridan Parker is one of those men who are raised up in your country by the agitation of mind which prevails so extensively among you. His "Discourses" were sent me by Thomas Davis of Providence, a gentleman who spent a few days with us in Dublin, & with whom some of us were much pleased. He is a great admirer of Parker's, both of them are very Free thinkers, which I like, but, as it seems to me that the opinions of men on religious matters, have, in general, but little influence on their acts for good or evil, my mind does not dwell much on points of difference in that respect. My wish is to be doing something daily for humanity, without dwelling on the peculiar opinions of those who act with me. I am myself attached to the Unitarian belief of Christianity, believing it to be its purest & best form. Yet I

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find among its professors as little heart, & as much
coldness as regards human improvement, as among any others
of the sects I am acquainted with. Teetotalism is my favorite
hobby, & I can get very few of them to ride it with me. This
excites my wonder just as much as yours is excited at Garrison
that R D Webb & I do not think with you on the Brazilian
sugar question. / Rob Allen has this day given me the very
great pleasure of reading your letter to him & his good wife,
dated 27th June, & which has stimulated me to write you /
& yet after all, I don't think there is any great difference
between you & us on that matter. Richd & I never asked
our Government to do more than tell the Government of Brazil
that we could not enter into a new commercial treaty with
them until they emancipated all their slaves; as we looked
upon all the product of slave labor as stolen goods. For my
part, I think it would be just as right for me to purchase
goods that I knew to be stolen from a neighbor, as to purchase
slave grown produce. You would leave the decision of the
point to individual conscience, because any action of
Government upon it would be an infringement of liberty
of thought & action, & because the laws of Government must
be maintained by force; are not all taxes which we pay

unwillingly, an encroachment on the former? & do not all civil contracts of every kind imply an ultimate resort to the latter? do you therefore object to all taxation, & to every legal contract in trade, or for the purchase of lands or houses? It is my impression that Government should, in the first instance be, as nearly as possible, a concentration of the voice of the whole people. I would give every man & every woman of full age, & who was not at the time suffering a penalty for a breach of the laws, a voice in the election of representatives, & then, it seems to me that, a Government so chosen, should take cognizance of every matter of public interest or utility. & that on all questions which might arise, & which could be fairly debated by Representatives frequently responsible to their constituents, the minority would be morally bound quietly to submit to the judgment of the majority. A fair representation being the theory of our Government, I see no impropriety in applying it to adopt such fiscal regulations as the majority in Parliament would be found willing to adopt. If we were obliged to wait for the consent of every individual to the enactment of every law, there would be an end to all Government, & it seems to me that anarchy would be the inevitable consequence. Neither R D Watt nor I, could

sanction the use of such force as would endanger life, for the maintenance of our laws; if they could not be executed without such means, I must be a Non-Resistant, in what I imagine to be your meaning of the term, that is, opposed to all Governmental action. but I do not think such means need be used, nor do I hold myself responsible for the acts of our Government when it resorts to them. It seems to me that a moral influence sufficiently strong to ensure obedience to all good laws, would exist in a well regulated society. Now for the Brazilian question, & for my reasons (in which I believe R.D.W coincides) for rejecting commercial relations with that people. In the first place I consider all slave grown produce stolen goods, & therefore not a lawful source of commerce. if it were possible, I would reject American Cotton wool, but the very fact of the difficulties in which our trade with you for that blood stained article, known in our ports
strikes me as a strong reason why we should decline to trade with Brazil at all, so long as she holds slaves. Our trade with your slave states has created such a pecuniary interest in your country, & in ours, in favor of slavery, an interest which has increased your slaves from 700,000 to 2,700,000, should we not be careful to

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avoid doing any thing to produce a similar calamitous
result in other lands? If we enter into a free trade
intercourse with Brazil such as would create an exchanged
interchange of our various products, is it not absolutely certain
that she will require a greater number of slaves to supply
the increased demand, & would we not be accessary to
God, unless we protested against the measure, for all
the additional misery to the human species which would
result from it? If we be not guided by the experience which
the increase of slavery in your slave states affords, of what
use is experience to us? Can there be a doubt that your
increase of slavery is owing to our great trade with you?
& is it not equally a truth that, if England, more than
70 years ago, had refused to take your staple
produce that your slaves would have been then made free? partly
from a desire to ensure our custom, & partly because the pecuniary interest
in those days would not have been able to overwhelm the moral
feeling which then existed. But whether this would have been the
result or not, should not we have done our duty? I request to deal
in stolen goods. I say it is equally our duty in the present day, but
we are surrounded with greater difficulties from accomplishment.
millions of our people now live by your cotton wool, & would it

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not be a pleasant thing to say to them, you must lie down & starve, for the thing you live by is dishonestly obtained. It is to avoid a difficulty of this kind, to keep down, instead of to raise up pecuniary obstacles for our children to have to surmount, in case slavery shall ever be abolished in our day, that I ask our Government to say to the Brazilians "we'll have no trade with you". Have appeals to the Laodicean Conscience to cry out against all slave produce, & then purse to the world their sincerity, but they have not listened to such appeals of course. I think their action on the subject is wrong. I do not think your parallel case touching oppression in Ireland & wickedness elsewhere, goes to the point. Oppression exists everywhere, but I do not feel that we are bound to enter into a crusade against it in other lands. Slavery is a sin so atrocious that it seems to me to have no parallel, making a chattel of a human being, transcends all other wickedness. Oppression is an evil which depends on many causes over which we have little or no control, or even in the arrangement of human affairs, arising out of our limited knowledge of the laws of Nature & of our own being; for instance, I may be going on wrong principles for the abolition of slavery, or you may be opposing a right one, in either case mischief is done with the very best intentions on our part; but there can be no mistake about Slavery, it is wrong to steal a man, it is an outrage

against our nature which no human being can avoid seeing, because he knows it would be a crime if practiced against himself.

After all this long explanation or justification of myself, I leave my friend R D W to fight his own battle / I "guess" you'll just use down as one of those who dread "some ghost of a crinkle gunee". You are a Non Resistant, & I suppose an opponent of all Government action in which any degree of physical force is entertained. I think any amount of physical force which can be used in love, & with a sincere desire to benefit the wrong doer, may be resorted to by a Christian, so that you & I do not start in argument from a common point. I can understand your objections to many views, but I cannot understand R D Allen's, for he does not profess to be a bit more of a Non-resistant than I do myself. R D W's brother Jas H Webb, professes to be more of an absolute Non resistant than any of us. I tell him we must each wait for more light, before we can see alike. Pardon this long epistle, & if you see errors in principle in my argument, do not therefore set me down as a bad man, or as an impracticable man. I know my mind is very limited in its range, but my intentions are good.

I rejoice at any indication of success in your Anti Slavery labors, your noble declaration "No Union with Slaveholders" meets my warm approval. I would avoid all private contact with such men. We mean again to stimulate our acquaintance as

behalf of your next Bazaar, but it is difficult to excite any deep
anti slavery feeling here - it is looked upon rather a work in
which we have little or no concern, that we have abolished the evil
in our own dominions, & that that is sufficient on our part - Our
political position almost absorbs all the thoughts of the people,
under O'Connell's guidance Ireland is now solving a problem of
mighty importance, that is, whether moral power can secure human
rights, but I do not think the time has yet arrived when that
question will be fairly tried, ~~men~~ people are only taught to avoid
fighting, because it is not their interest to fight, not because it
is a wrong thing to fight - O'Connell is the only man of that
party, with whom I am acquainted, who has a real horror of,
objection to, the shedding of blood - While he lives, I believe we
shall be safe from the calamity of civil war, but, if England
should be involved in a European war, before the catholics the
wishes of the Irish people, I imagine she will get no help
from them, so that I think our agitation is a security for the
peace of Europe, as I can hardly imagine the English government
so mad as to provoke a war, or even to be very testy on points
of honor, so long as our present dislike to her exists - O'Connell
& his brother patriots in prison, are the beloved & honored of their
country, I think England is now in that position in which

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